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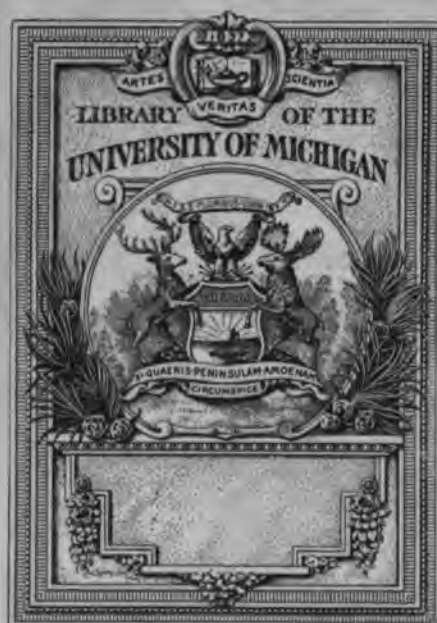
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Eulogictory Address
OF
ABNER CHENEY GOODELL, JR.
TO THE
NEW-ENGLAND
HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

22 JUNE, 1892

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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

OF

ABNER CHENEY GOODELL, JR.

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BOSTON
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
M.DCCC.XCII

University Press :
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

FOR THE YEAR 1892.

President.

ABNER CHENEY GOODELL, JR., A.M., of Salem, Massachusetts.

Vice-Presidents.

BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD, LL.D., of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JOSEPH WILLIAMSON, A.M., of Belfast, Maine.

JOSEPH BURBEEN WALKER, A.M., of Concord, New Hampshire.

JAMES BARRETT, LL.D., of Rutland, Vermont.

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HENRY WINCHESTER CUNNINGHAM, A.B., of Boston, Massachusetts.

The Council.

Ex Officiis.

ABNER C. GOODELL, JR., A.M.

BENJAMIN A. GOULD, LL.D.

G. ARTHUR HILTON, LL.B.

HENRY H. EDES.

BENJAMIN B. TORREY.

HENRY W. CUNNINGHAM, A.B.

Term Expires 1893.

GRENVILLE HOWLAND NORCROSS, LL.B., of Boston, Massachusetts.

HENRY PICKERING WALCOTT, M.D., of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

EZRA HOYT BYINGTON, D.D., of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Term Expires 1894.

WILLIAM CLAFLIN, LL.D., of Newton, Massachusetts.

JOHN TYLER HASSAM, A.M., of Boston, Massachusetts.

HENRY WILLIAMS, A.B., of Boston, Massachusetts.

Term Expires, 1895.

ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY, DD., LL.D., of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

HAMILTON ANDREWS HILL, A.M., of Boston, Massachusetts.

BENJAMIN GREENE SMITH, of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

OFFICERS

APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1892.

Historiographer.

HAMILTON ANDREWS HILL, A.M. BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

Editor of Publications.

JOHN WARD DEAN, A.M. MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS.

LIST OF THE GENTLEMEN WHO RETIRED FROM OFFICE 22 JUNE, 1892.

ABNER C. GOODELL, JR., A.M.	<i>President.</i>
BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD, LL.D.	<i>Vice-President.</i>
G. ARTHUR HILTON, LL.B.	<i>Recording Secretary.</i>
HENRY H. EDES	<i>Corresponding Secretary.</i>
HENRY W. CUNNINGHAM, A.B.	<i>Librarian.</i>
ANDREW P. PEABODY, D.D., LL.D.	} <i>Councillors.</i>
HAMILTON ANDREWS HILL, A.M.	
BENJAMIN G. SMITH	
HENRY WILLIAMS, A.B.	
GRENVILLE H. NORCROSS, LL.B.	
HENRY PICKERING WALCOTT, M.D.	

Mr. HAMILTON ANDREWS HILL retired also from the office of Historiographer on the first of July, following.

THE

PRESIDENT'S VALEDICTORY.

GENTLEMEN :

It will doubtless meet your expectations as well as accord with the wishes of the Council, if, on behalf of the retiring administration, I improve this occasion to briefly render an account of our stewardship.

The system of management of the affairs of our Society which went into operation on the second day of January, 1889, was so generally believed to be an improvement upon the previous system that it was adopted without dissent. By a provision of the old By-Laws, or *Constitution*, as some of those rules were called, all who had served seven years on the Board of Directors became *ipso facto* Directors for life. This provision was found by experience to be objectionable in two respects; first, in that it constantly diminished the relative influence of newly-elected directors; and second, in that it kept the control of the administration in the hands of persons whose active interest in the Society declined with increasing years. Hence, practically, under that system it was found on the one hand that the relations between the main body of the Society and those who administered its affairs were growing more distant, inso-much that reform was almost hopeless, and on the other hand, by the easy sufferance of the Board of Directors the whole management had drifted into a few hands so

By-Laws proposed by the present administration unanimously approved.

Permanency of the old Board of Directors under the old By-Laws objectionable.

burdened with routine duties as to be unwilling or unable to undertake any considerable work of improvement.

The rule changed by the new By-Laws.

Three-fifths of the Council changed every year.

Annual reports of the Council.

President lays before the new administration a statement of its finances, and of the needs of the library.

Difficulty of getting at the facts.

Further investigation into the donations recommended.

Printing of the President's Address to the Council on 14 January, 1889, postponed :

As soon as the new By-Laws took effect, all this was changed. Of the fifteen Councillors which constitute the government as now organized, nine go out of office every year unless re-elected, three more go out the next year, and the rest at the end of the third year. Thus the Society has the power at any Annual Meeting by a change of administration to redress any grievance or institute any reform, while enough Councillors hold over each year to continue the traditions of the Board, to prevent the interruption or failure of unfinished business, and to protect the Society from the unjust demands of outsiders with whom we may have had dealings.

The doings of the Council have been reported to you annually, and hence what I shall now offer in retrospection will be but a recapitulation of former statements.

At the outset of the new departure, I felt it my duty, in an Address to the Council, to lay before them a Statement of the condition of the Society respecting its finances and the condition of its library and library accommodations as well as its future work, with the view of eliciting the opinion of the Board in regard to the best course to pursue. The imperfect condition of the records greatly increased the labor of preparing this statement, and notwithstanding my search for information outside of the records was pressed as far as it could be without indelicacy, I found it impossible in the time at my command to give a complete account of the Donations received by the Society. I therefore recommended that the investigation be still further prosecuted by a proper committee. This, however, was never done, and hence the printing of this statement (which I had requested might be deferred until after its details could be verified by comparison with the Committee's report) was not attempted until recently.

As a copy of this Statement, under the title of "President's Address to the Council," is in the hands of every member of the Society, I will not extract from it here more than a single passage, which I may be pardoned for quoting, since it explains the reason for the policy we have adopted of conferring upon Committees a large share of the regular work of the Society. On page 33 you will find the following: —

— printed in May, 1892.

"I suggest that a discreet distribution of duties among several committees would be the best means of effecting this work satisfactorily, and at the same time would afford us an opportunity for enlisting the services of a larger number of our members, particularly of the younger men, who I am persuaded need only an invitation to become eventually most active and valuable agents in promoting the growth and increasing the usefulness of the Society."

Distribution of duties recommended therein.

It was my good fortune to have all my suggestions to the Council cordially approved, and the work I proposed promptly begun. In accordance with my recommendation to the last Board of Directors, some progress had already been made in clearing out the cellar of the Society's House, which had long been the receptacle of a vast accumulation of books, pamphlets, and newspapers. The greater portion of these was in boxes, piled from floor to ceiling. No account of the contents of these packages had been preserved, but presumably they embraced much that was valuable. The stacks being separated by narrow passages and standing on waste paper and other inflammable rubbish, which littered the whole floor nearly to the furnace, consent to have this accumulation removed and examined was finally obtained, in view of the imminent danger from fire which could only be avoided by such a change.

Harmony between the President and the Council. President's recommendations approved in regard to clearing the cellar of the Society's House:

The new administration were not unwilling to listen to a proposal to find within the Society's House the accommodation for the library which their predecessors

— to provide room for the library within the House.

Preliminary question as to need of further room settled by taking a complete inventory of the Society's books, etc.

All books, pamphlets, and papers thoroughly catalogued.

Useless literature eliminated.

Impracticability of keeping files of newspapers.

had been looking for in a contemplated extension in the rear or by the purchase of an adjoining estate. Before deciding on any plan, however, it was thought best to know approximately what further accommodation was needed. This could only be done by making an inventory of all our literary collections, from which to cull what were undoubtedly worth preserving, and thus to ascertain what proportion, if any, should be eliminated as not germane to the purposes of the Society. This work was most faithfully and thoroughly accomplished, and I have heard of no adverse criticism on it, save the suggestion that as every piece of paper not a mere waste fragment was duly catalogued, more expense had been incurred than was necessary. But since the total outlay for this work, continued through more than twenty months, was comparatively small, and since the catalogues will forever conclusively remove all doubt as to the wisdom of parting with the literature disposed of, I am sure the expense will never be grudged, especially as there was no further payment on account of managing the library, — the Library Committee, which serves gratuitously, having had charge of the library during the whole time.

In deciding where to draw the line of exclusion of useless literature, most of the material was so obviously unsuitable for the Society's use that there were but two questions particularly embarrassing; one concerning the newspapers and the other the periodicals. Of the former, our collection embraced 1414 different titles, comprising 186 bound and 683 unbound series, more or less complete. The project of perfecting these files could not be entertained for a moment. The cost of collecting and binding would exceed our whole income, and if completed, the 1414 sets could not be stored in our building without excluding everything else. It was, therefore, deemed best to retain past and present files of but two current daily newspapers besides the files of

Notes

papers the publication of which began before the year 1800. At the same time a plan was adopted of preserving for ready reference, by cutting out, pasting in scrap-books and indexing, all biographies and obituary notices, historical articles and publications of marriages and deaths, in one at least of the current newspapers.

Of the periodical pamphlets, there were but two concerning the exclusion of which there was any hesitation. These were the "North American Review" and the "Christian Examiner." Both sets were incomplete and had been rarely referred to. Indeed, the latter, which was the gift of our honored associate, Mr. William B. Trask, had never been unpacked. The committee charged with the sale and exchange of books, therefore, seeing that the "Review" comprised over four hundred numbers, and the "Examiner" between eighty and ninety volumes, decided that the shelf-room occupied by them was more valuable to us than the books, and so both of the sets were disposed of. The "Examiner," after having been completed, was eventually returned to the donor, and the "Review" was sold at a price at which — or a little more probably — it can be replaced by another set, if desired. In disposing of all other literature, a liberal course was pursued, the aim being to place it gratuitously where it would be useful in completing imperfect sets in other libraries, especially those most easily accessible to the members of the Society, or to exchange it for books useful to us.

North American Review and Christian Examiner, the only serials excluded. The Society's sets incomplete. These works bulky and can be replaced at any time, if required.

When our collections had been thus sifted, there appeared no necessity of enlarging our Building for some years at least, provided the walls could be so strengthened as to bear the weight of a library upon the upper floor. Upon consulting with expert architects and engineers it appeared that the strengthening of the northern wall was desirable, whether the upper hall were to be used as a library or only, as heretofore, for the meet-

Result of sifting our books: room enough for the library in our present building. Walls strengthened.

Library removed to third floor.

ings of the Society. Accordingly that work was ordered and completed. Four strong buttresses supporting iron beams to take the ends of floor joists running through the building were erected on independent foundations and securely tied to the walls. The gallery supports were also strengthened. During the progress of this work, the plan of removing the library to the upper hall was developed, approved by the Council, and soon afterward completed. The objection of possible want of light and ventilation had already been met by the building of the new skylight which replaced the insufficient opening in the roof that had been so long a source of trouble and expense from its imperfect construction and leaky condition.

Plan for fitting the second floor for our meetings. Why this plan was not carried out.

A plan for fitting up the old library room on the second floor conveniently for the meetings of the Society had long been discussed, and estimates of the cost had been obtained; but owing to the causes which eventually compelled the resignation of a majority of the Council, that work has not been prosecuted. The shelf-room of this lower hall, however, was estimated to be sufficient to relieve the library proper of all books only occasionally referred to, and thus to make room for such accessions as the library would ordinarily receive during the next ten years.

Small expense of the changes.

I close this brief sketch by the statement, which cannot fail to interest you, that the expense of all these changes, including the cataloguing of books, pamphlets, and newspapers, which has been deemed properly chargeable to the Building Fund (since this work is necessarily incident to the particular object for which that fund was raised), has reduced the principal only \$3,924.01, — leaving unexpended the sum of \$21,006.38.

The Building Fund: Showalter Investment.

The Building Fund, as transmitted to the present administration by the former Board of Directors, was chiefly invested in the securities of the Showalter Investment Company. The unfortunate failure of that com-

pany to make good its promises is known to you all, and therefore I am sure you will be pleased to learn that, of the \$10,000 in mortgages negotiated to us but not guaranteed by the Company, \$5,960 have already been recovered in actual cash, and \$900 more is sure to be paid to us next September. We have also obtained a perfect title to land mortgaged to us for \$465, and have begun to foreclose two other mortgages amounting to \$1,825. The only loss on these securities, actually ascertained thus far, besides the unpaid interest, is \$450, caused by selling for \$1,200 cash a mortgage of the nominal value of \$1,600, and paying \$50 more as commission for the transaction. This certainly is not discouraging.

Present
status of
our invest-
ment in that
Company.

All our other Funds have steadily increased under the management of the Council. The respective amounts of these Funds as they stood when I was first called to this Chair, and as they footed up at the end of the last fiscal year, are as follows:—

All other
funds have
increased.

	Jan. 1887.	Jan. 1892.
Towne Memorial Fund	\$3,963.28	\$5,417.47
Barstow Fund	988.62	1,200.00
Life Membership Fund	11,217.74	12,717.74
Bond Fund	859.46	1,078.47

Of the first of these Funds it is only fair to remark, however, that the increase is due to accumulation of income during a suspension of the publication of our Memorial Biographies. This was the result of an effort to restore the principal of the Fund, which had been improvidently encroached upon before it came under our management. Of the last, or Bond, Fund it is equally fair to add that it has been virtually many times multiplied by the recovery of the pages believed to have been lost. The Society is thus enabled to offer for sale the entire edition completed, which at the current price should bring not less than \$10,000.

This increase of the Funds just enumerated will be made more obvious by a statement of the total amount

